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21 October 1958

MEMORANDUM TO: All Offices in DD/I Area

SUBJECT: Operation Alert 1959: Concept

1. The DD/I has approved in principle the use of a damage assessment problem for the DD/I portion of Operation Alert 1959.

2. The following information concerning this problem is tentative and subject to revision as the problem is studied but is presented here for planning purposes.

a. The Situation

After a short period of political tension and conflicting indications of a Soviet intention to engage in hostilities, Government relocation cadres are directed to proceed immediately to their re-location sites. The first nuclear explosion in US territory occurs at 0805 on the morning of the first day of the exercise.

b. CIA receives information from the USAF, AEDTS and NSA concerning the location of nuclear explosions in the USSR. This information will be received by CIA at the rate of about 50 ground zeros every twelve hours.

c. During the exercise it will be assumed that ground zeros were actually at the coordinates given in the incoming reports. It will also be assumed that all explosions were air bursts and that the resulting damage followed a standard pattern to be announced later. Assumptions concerning fall-out will also be announced.

d. It will be assumed that the USAF is unable to do damage assessment on the Soviet Union.

e. CIA has been asked to give summaries of the current situation in the Soviet Union every four hours and an estimate of probable Soviet capabilities and future courses of action every twelve hours.

f. The CIA relocation force will be organized to work on a twenty-four hour basis. OCI will produce the summaries of the current situation and ONE will be responsible for producing the estimates of probable Soviet Capabilities and future courses of action based on contributions from the other offices wherever appropriate.

g. Summaries and estimates will be prepared in message format, ready for delivery to the message center, but each report will be clearly labelled "Exercise message not to be transmitted." The message will be delivered instead to the office of the Acting DCI at the relocation center.

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h. The substantive part of the exercise will be conducted as a purely CIA problem and will not involve contact with outside agencies.

i. During the exercise, as a separate problem, OHI and the Offices responsible for EIC, OMIC, JAEIC, and SEC activities will undertake an inventory of skills in their fields of responsibility represented by personnel at the relocation sites of other intelligence agencies.

j. The Acting DD/I and Acting ADs will be announced later. During the exercise certain key persons will be assumed to have succumbed to radiation sickness and will be withdrawn from the exercise.

k. Role of O/O components will be announced later.

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Assistant to DD/I (Planning)

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